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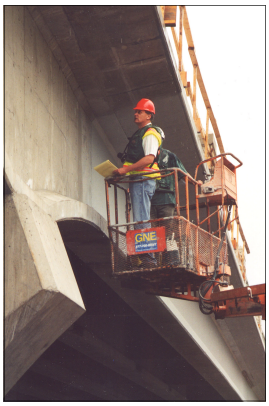
Newsline

Newsletter of the Montana Department of Transportation Rail, Transit & Planning Division

September 2007

Montana Bridges: An Overview



An inspector checks the underside of a bridge with the aid of a snooper truck.

Headlines about the condition and safety of bridges across the nation have left many Montanans wondering how Montana bridges measure up. The good news is that MDT has an aggressive bridge program that includes inspections, design, maintenance, and construction to ensure the long-term viability and safety of the state's bridges.

Three terms used to rate bridge condition often catch the public off guard and quickly give the impression bridges are not safe. The terms *deficient*, *structurally deficient*, and *functionally obsolete* sound ominous and lead some to believe collapse of a structure is imminent.

This is not the case. The federal government uses these terms to rate a bridge's eligibility for funding. It is important to understand that the terms do not indicate the relative safety of a bridge.

Structurally deficient simply indicates something on the bridge is in need of attention. This could range from minor repairs to more serious problems such as structural damage or erosion. *Functionally obsolete* describes a bridge that does not meet current transportation standards or demands. The lanes may not be wide enough or the bridge may need a sidewalk to accommodate pedestrians. *Deficient* is an umbrella term used to indicate the bridge is either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

There are more than 5,000 bridges in Montana. Of those, 2,662 are state-owned. Most of the remaining are county-owned with some owned by federal agencies. Of the bridges MDT inspects, 500 are rated as structurally deficient and 540 are rated as functionally obsolete.

MDT inspects all state and county-owned bridges on routes eligible for fuel-tax funding. The bridges are inspected on a 24-month cycle with the exception of 831 prestressed concrete-girder bridges that the Federal Highway Administration has approved for a 48-month cycle. There are currently four bridges on a six-month inspection cycle due to deficiencies in need of closer monitoring. Additionally, MDT maintenance staff routinely travel the state highway system monitoring the condition of the roadway infrastructure, including bridges.

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MDT Director Jim Lynch speaks to concerned citizens in Kalispell—part of MDT's series of community traffic safety forums.

MDT Presents Safety Forums Across Montana

As part of the Montana Department of Transportation's commitment to saving lives on Montana's roads, Director Jim Lynch and representatives from other state and local agencies are holding community traffic safety forums across the state. The goals of the forums are to provide residents with information on the types and causes of crashes in their regions and to gather ideas on how to improve safety. To date, meetings have been held in Big Sky, Gallatin Gateway, and Kalispell.

Providing data and statistics to residents has both affirmed and dispelled myths and long-held beliefs of residents. For example, that the day of the week and time of day can indicate whether those involved in crashes are local commuters or visitors. Another eye-opener for some has been the high percentage of alcohol-related fatalities and fatalities involving unbuckled vehicle occupants.

Other meetings will be held along high-crash corridors in the state. High-crash corridors are designated based on crash severity and the number of fatalities and incapacitating injuries.

Addressing high-crash corridors is just one area of emphasis in the Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (available at *http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/chsp/*). This plan identifies statewide traffic safety issues that must be addressed. The plan sets aggressive goals for reducing fatalities and crashes. MDT is working with law enforcement, emergency responders, tribal governments, public health agencies, local governments, and other stakeholders to meet these goals.

MDT works every day to improve traffic safety but can't do it alone. Involving everyone who travels on Montana's roads is key to saving lives.

Impaired Drivers Beware!

The Montana Department of Transportation and the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) collaborated this year to acquire a new tool against impaired drivers: the Mobile Impaired Driving Assessment Center or MIDAC.

The MIDAC was unveiled June 20. MHP and local law enforcement agencies will use it year-round near events and areas associated with alcohol or drug consumption and impaired driving.

Because it is deployed close to enforcement activities, the MIDAC reduces the time arresting officers spend transporting suspected impaired drivers to the nearest jail. Officers can evaluate DUI suspects at the MIDAC and then return to the road to continue traffic enforcement and safety activities.

"The Department of Transportation is pleased to have this partnering opportunity with the patrol," said MDT Director Jim Lynch. "Getting impaired drivers off the road is about saving lives, and with Montana having the highest rate of impaired driving fatalities in the nation, we have our work cut out for us."

MDT funded the $250,000 center using a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. MHP will own, operate, and maintain the MIDAC. Local and tribal law enforcement will be able to process impaired drivers at the center when it is deployed in or near their jurisdictions.

The MIDAC is a self-propelled vehicle that, at a length of 39 feet and width of almost 8 feet, resembles an oversized moving truck. The center is outfitted with an Intoxilyzer 8000 (state-of-the-art blood-alcohol content testing equipment), portable breath-testing devices, a surveillance system, high-tech data collection system and communication capability, refrigeration for storing blood evidence, and a bathroom.

Preliminary data shows almost half of the fatalities on Montana roads last year (119 of 263) involved an impaired driver. Additionally, one in five injuries from traffic crashes involved an impaired driver, the highest rate since 1994. In 2006 alone, the economic loss due to crashes involving impaired drivers exceeded $193 million.

The 39-foot long, 8-foot wide Mobile Impaired Driving Assessment Center will be deployed to events and areas where impaired driving is likely to be prevalent.

The center is filled with a variety of tools for detecting impaired drivers. The familiar straight line, shown above, rounds out state-of-the-art blood-alcohol testing equipment, portable breath-testing devices, and a surveillance system.

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All bridge inspections are conducted in compliance with the National Bridge Inspection Standards. A bridge inspection involves a methodical process developed to ensure all elements of a bridge are inspected and nothing is overlooked. To gain access to all elements of a bridge, MDT uses "snooper" trucks as well as contractors who do underwater inspections and inspections that require climbing gear.

MDT spends an average of $1.5 million annually for bridge inspection activities, underwater inspections, non-destructive testing, bridge rating, and scour evaluation activities.

Any state-owned bridge in Montana found to be unsafe is removed from service until it can be safely returned to operation or replaced. For county-owned bridges, MDT reports findings immediately to the county and coordinates closure if appropriate.

The department uses an asset-management process called the Performance Programming Process (P^3). P^3 allocates funding for the state system based on performance measures and data from the pavement, bridge, congestion, and safety management systems. Bridge inspection data is used to determine funding needs and priorities for bridge repair, preservation, and replacement.

The department carefully manages its resources to keep the network of bridges across the state in safe condition. Ongoing preservation and preventative maintenance is a top priority. The department will spend $29 million on bridge projects in federal fiscal year 2008 and $30 million in FFY 2009. This does not include bridge work conducted in association with other highway construction projects.

Bridges are a key component of Montana's transportation infrastructure, and MDT will continue to do everything possible to ensure they are safe and sound.

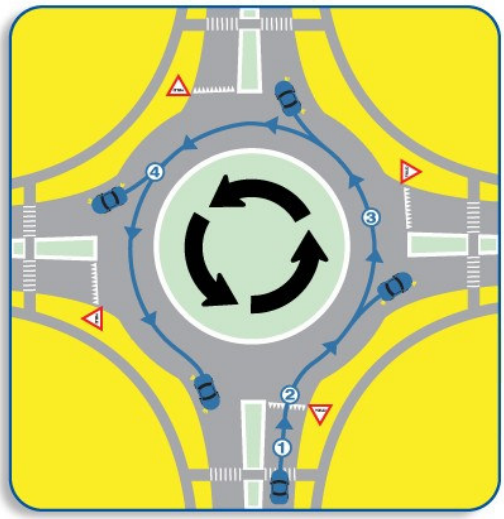
Roundabouts Come to Montana

Roundabouts in Montana

The first roundabout constructed by the Montana Department of Transportation is now open to traffic in Kalispell. Two more roundabouts are slated to open in the Helena area in November, and more roundabouts are being designed into MDT projects.

In response to increasing interest in roundabouts as a traffic-control tool, MDT's engineering analysis has identified several intersections around the state where roundabouts would be more effective than traditional traffic signals or four-way stops.

Roundabouts are not appropriate for all intersections; however, they do provide communities with safe, effective tools to keep traffic flowing.



Benefits of a roundabout

Reduces severity of crashes. According to the Federal Highway Administration, a roundabout typically results in a 76 percent reduction in injury accidents, 90 percent reduction in fatalities, and 40 percent reduction in pedestrian injuries. The reduction in accidents is a direct result of slower speeds and a decrease in conflict points within the intersection.

Reduces the speed of traffic and increases efficiency of traffic flow. Vehicles enter the roundabout at a reduced speed. Traffic yields instead of stopping. This allows traffic to flow more efficiently as it smoothly moves through the intersection at a consistent rate.

Reduces pollution and saves fuel. Roundabouts reduce the time vehicles spend idling at intersections. Reducing idling time also lowers fuel consumption and exhaust emissions.

Saves taxpayers money. Roundabouts save taxpayers approximately $5,000 per year per intersection in traffic signal maintenance and electricity.

How to navigate a single-lane roundabout

Slow down. Driving speeds in roundabouts are 15 mph or less.

Look to the left. Traffic flows in a counterclockwise direction. Yield to vehicles in the roundabout. They have the right-of-way.

Stay right. Enter the roundabout and stay to the right of the center island. Do not stop if the way is clear. *Never pass or overtake another vehicle after entering a roundabout.* Travel around the circle until you reach your desired street, use your right-turn signal and exit the roundabout.

When entering and exiting, watch for and yield to pedestrians in or waiting at the crosswalk.

Give large vehicles the space they need. Roundabouts are designed to handle all sizes of vehicles, including truck and trailer combinations. The center island of the single-lane roundabout is built with a gradually sloped and flat curb, called a truck apron. The rear wheels of a large vehicle will cross over the truck apron. *The driver of the smaller vehicle should drop behind the larger truck as it completes its travel through the roundabout.*

Yield to pedestrians. All pedestrians must cross at the designated crosswalks. Never cross to the central island. Although vehicles are required to stop for pedestrians, pedestrians should always exercise caution when crossing.

Walk your bike and use the crosswalks. Bicyclists are encouraged to walk their bikes on the sidewalks and use the pedestrian crosswalks. If you are comfortable riding in traffic, ride on the circulatory roadway of the roundabout like a car, but obey the same traffic rules as motorized vehicles. Clearly signal your turning intentions.

Emergency Vehicles. *Do not pull over or stop in the roundabout when approached by an emergency vehicle. Continue on and exit as normal, then pull to the right where there is room for the emergency vehicle to pass.* If you are approaching the roundabout, pull over if there is room for the emergency vehicle to get by. If not, continue through the roundabout and pull over after you have exited.

To see a roundabout in action, visit *http://www.roundabouts.ca/orc_webcam.htm.* For more information, visit MDT's Web site at *www.mdt.mt.gov*.

Rail, Transit & Planning Division Relocates

The Rail, Transit and Planning Division's new location at 2960 Prospect Avenue in Helena.

MDT's Rail, Transit and Planning Division recently moved one block east to 2960 Prospect Avenue.

Our new office is in the same red and white building as the Les Schwab Tire store, next door to Staples.

Division contact information remains the same. If we can be of service, drop by or give us a call at 444-3423 or (800)714-7296.

Signs on Private Property Must Comply With MUTCD

It looks like a stop sign, and to most of us "whoa" means the same thing as "stop," but under federal regulations, the traffic sign pictured at left is illegal, even on private property.

Traffic control devices on privately owned property open to public access have to conform to the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The MUTCD sets nationwide standards for road signs, pavement markings, and other traffic control devices. According to those standards, stop signs have to say STOP, not WHOA.

Some key elements of the MUTCD, which is approved by the Federal Highway Administration, are standard traffic signs, standard pavement markings, and breakaway posts. A full description of acceptable traffic control devices and their application is available at *www.mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov*.

"Privately owned property open to public access" includes roads within shopping centers, parking lots, sports arenas, and other business and recreation facilities where the public is allowed to travel without access restrictions. (See the *Federal Register*, Volume 71, Number 240, Page 75111.)

MDT recommends that MUTCD requirements on privately owned property open to public access be incorporated in local laws such as zoning regulations and site development requirements.

More Nonconforming Signs & Lines

Should you stop all the time or just when the crosswalk is occupied? This combination of signs is confusing.

Here, the stop sign's shape is lost against an oval background. The octagon shape is important — it lets drivers know they're at a stop sign even when the letters are obscured by snow or lighting conditions.

Traffic control devices include pavement markings. The chevrons pictured at left are an example of pavement markings that don't conform to MUTCD standards.

The Empire Builder arrives at Shelby on an early spring day. In 2006, there were over 150,000 boardings and alightings at Montana's 12 Amtrak stations.

Lt. Governor Testifies in Support of Empire Builder

In addition to providing critical transportation services to Montana's Hi-Line for over 78 years, the Empire Builder is Amtrak's premier long-distance passenger rail route. It was fitting then, when Representative Corrine Brown, the Chairwoman of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, asked Montana Lieutenant Governor John Bohlinger to provide testimony about the importance of Amtrak's long-distance routes.

In his testimony at the June 26 subcommittee hearing in Washington, D.C., the Lieutenant Governor emphasized the importance of long-distance routes like the Empire Builder to areas of the U.S. that do not have access to major airports or interstate highways. "Especially during the winter, when highways are often closed due to extreme weather, the Empire Builder provides lifeline transportation to residents and businesses that have few other options," Bohlinger said.

The Empire Builder provided nearly 500,000 rides in 2006 with over 150,000 boardings and alightings at Montana's 12 stations. In addition to serving out-of-state visitors to Montana attractions such as Glacier National Park and Whitefish Mountain, the Empire Builder provides transportation for Montana residents traveling to health care facilities, jobs, and schools. "These . . . are not the vacationers that some have characterized as the primary users of long-distance passenger rail service," Bohlinger said. "They are Montana residents who rely on the Empire Builder for essential transportation."

The Lieutenant Governor concluded by stressing the importance of long-distance routes as part of the national passenger rail system. "Amtrak's long-distance routes are an essential element of a passenger rail network that benefits the entire country," Bohlinger said. "A national passenger rail system without long-distance routes is not a national passenger rail system. It is a disconnected and inefficient system that provides little or no national benefit."

Congress will determine fiscal year 2008 funding levels for Amtrak later this fall.

Agency Cooperation Leads to New Highway 200 Bridge

Thanks to the cooperation of three government agencies, MDT recently awarded a design/build project* to replace the Montana Highway 200 bridge that crosses the Blackfoot River near Milltown. This is an excellent example of how intergovernmental agency coordination can result in the most beneficial and efficient use of taxpayer funds.

The Highway 200 bridge is one of five Blackfoot River structures the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Milltown Dam Removal project will impact. The dam removal, scheduled for the summer of 2008, will lower the riverbed and possibly undermine up-stream structures built after the dam was constructed in 1908. EPA's plans originally called for making improvements to the existing Highway 200 bridge; however, as the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), EPA, and MDT staffs began reviewing the escalating costs of buttressing the 58-year-old bridge, talks shifted to using the funds to replace the aging structure with a modern design.

For the replacement project to move forward, each of the agencies had to weigh the long-term benefits of bridge replacement against the considerable obstacles associated with the proposal. Obstacles included the need for additional funding, impacts to the Milltown community, coordinating with the dam removal schedule, constructability issues, and project liabilities.

Ultimately, with involvement of MDT Director Jim Lynch, DEQ Director Richard Opper, and EPA Montana Office Director John Wardell, the agencies agreed that MDT could move forward with the project.

With the decision reached, MDT project engineers quickly ramped-up efforts to develop and advertise a design/build bridge replacement project. In addition to the innovative project development and construction process, MDT also included the construction of a temporary bypass bridge in the design package to minimize adverse safety and economic impacts to the Milltown community.

The project is currently in the design phase and the contractor will begin mobilizing on site to start the temporary bridge construction this fall. The new bridge is slated for construction in the summer of 2008 and should open to traffic next fall.

Though this project is a small part of the overall Milltown Dam removal project, it provides an excellent example of state and federal government agencies working together to provide Montana's citizens the best return on infrastructure investments while also taking into consideration needs and impacts in local communities.

**"Design/build" is an innovative contracting method that combines the design and construction of a project into a single contract while maintaining MDT design standards, specifications, and contract administration practices. Typically, once MDT decides to move forward on a project, the first step is to develop the detailed design. After the project is designed, MDT advertises and invites construction firms to bid on it; then the project is awarded and construction begins. Design/build contracting reduces the time required from initiation of a project to placement of the new facility in service.*

Department of Commerce Director Anthony Priete addresses the Regional Economic Development Conference held August 1–3 in Havre. Attendees included representatives of local and state economic development agencies.

Economic Developers Briefed on MDT Services

MDT participated in a Regional Economic Development Conference August 1–3 at MSU Northern in Havre. Department of Commerce Director Anthony Priete organized the conference, which focused on improving relations between state and local economic development agencies.

Hal Fossum, MDT's liaison for economic development, represented the department at the meeting and addressed attendees about MDT programs and resources that could benefit economic developers and agencies. The following list is a sample of the resources MDT can provide:

- **District Offices:** MDT's five district offices are at the front line in assessing transportation needs, nominating projects, day-to-day coordination with local activities, and overall project management. They are excellent first points of contact.
- **Local Planning:** MDT provides financial and technical resources to help local authorities with the transportation aspects of local planning.
- **Corridor Planning:** MDT's studies in key transportation corridors offer opportunities to coordinate state and local needs.
- **Systems Impact Action Process:** This development permitting process is required for all proposals that would significantly or permanently impact the state's transportation system. Involving MDT early in the development process increases the likelihood of development approval.
- **Traffic and Facilities Data:** MTD tracks traffic volumes, safety, and roadway conditions for the state and federal highway systems. This data can be useful in civic and economic development planning as well as project development.
- **Transit:** MDT supports development of local transit services and broader services for local transit planning.
- **Research:** MDT annually solicits transportation research ideas and maintains an active research program and a library. Research ideas must have "sponsors" and "champions" within MDT.

This is only a partial list of services MDT makes available to economic developers and agencies. For more information, contact Hal Fossum at 444-6116 or *hfossum@mt.gov*.

New Studies Track Fish Movement Through Culverts

MSU researchers recently conducted studies to discover if culverts restrict the movement of fish in Montana streams.

The problem of fish passage through culverts has been in the forefront in recent years. We all want healthy Montana fisheries, but at the same time we recognize that limited budgets can force some tough decisions when it comes to balancing aquatic habitat with transportation needs. Two recently completed MDT research projects shed light on this issue.

Culverts have the potential to restrict the movement of fish and to keep them from upstream spawning grounds. This can reduce the number of fish in a stream and can also isolate segments of the population resulting in a loss of genetic diversity. Montana State University (MSU) conducted a study that followed the progress of electronically tagged fish through a series of culverts in a tributary of the Yellowstone River near Gardiner.

Some of the factors believed to impact fish movement include the culvert's design, water velocity, outlet drop height, and the depth of the plunge pool. The study found that the strongest indicator of fish passage was the water velocity in the culvert. The study also found that culverts roughened with baffles were easier for fish to swim through than smooth pipes.

MSU also did a study of the warm-water fish species found in eastern Montana. Prior to this project, there was only a small amount of anecdotal information about the mobility of prairie fish and their physical capacity to swim through the barriers imposed by a culvert.

This study, conducted on tributaries of the Yellowstone River near Glendive, found that fish species were well distributed in streams with culverts. For all species but one (longnose dace), the culverts in the study were not a significant barrier to upstream passage. This can be attributed to conditions in the culvert barrels that closely mimicked the habitats and low gradient of the natural stream. In addition, outlet drops were small compared to the outlet drops often seen in steeper mountainous drainages.

Overall, the study reinforced the notion that culverts should mimic the aquatic habitats and hydraulic conditions of the streams, while still meeting the hydraulic, safety, maintenance, and road-bearing needs of the system.

These reports are available on the Internet at *http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/env/fish_passage.shtml* and *http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/env/fish_passage_warm.shtml*. For more information, contact Sue Sillick at 444-7693 or *ssillick@mt.gov*.

Transit Tales

Safe Routes to School Guidebook Published

The official Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Guidebook was released in June. The guide explains how to start a successful SRTS program and also helps stakeholders identify problems and develop solutions for barriers to walking and bicycling to school. The guide contains information on the background and history of SRTS, as well as information on the "5 E's": Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, and Evaluation. Information links, forms, surveys, and checklists are also included.

SRTS project managers and those interested in starting a SRTS program in their communities can find the guidebook online at *www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/*. For a hard copy, contact the SRTS Coordinator, Virginia Summey, at (877)935-SAFE (7233).

Last year, Montana's Safe Routes to School program awarded almost $840,000 for 22 projects in 17 Montana communities. The 2007 application materials should be released sometime in September.

Montanans Urged to Walk to School Oct. 3

International Walk to School Day is October 3. Last year, 36 Montana schools participated in the event, which promotes a healthier lifestyle, community, and environment.

This year, the Safe Routes to School and Children's Health Insurance programs have joined to make Montana's 2007 Walk to School Day the biggest to date. So far, they have mailed over 23,000 postcards to 75 schools encouraging Montana children and their parents to join millions of other participants across the globe in walking or bicycling to school on October 3.

Schools can register at *www.walktoschool.org*. For additional information, call the SRTS information line at (877)935-SAFE (7233).

Save the Date

MDT will host its fall Transit Management Workshop November 8 and 9 in Helena at the MDT auditorium. Those in remote locations can participate via MDT's polycom system at MDT offices in Missoula, Glendive, Kalispell, and Havre. The training is free for any transit provider or transportation advisory committee member. For more information, contact David Jacobs at 444-9192 or *dajacobs@mt.gov*.

Border Hospitality

Montana's Ports of Entry Stations

by Jon Axline, MDT Historian

During the cash-strapped 1930s, tourism was an important part of the Montana economy. Despite the fact that 20 percent of Americans were out of work or held low-paying jobs, many still managed to scrape enough money together to load up the family car and head for wide open spaces in the American West. Montana was a favorite destination for thousands of Americans not only because of the spectacular scenery, the recreational opportunities, and colorful history of the state, but also because of how they were treated once they got here. Unlike other states, Montana went out of its way to make visitors feel welcome.

The Montana Highway Department not only built and maintained the state's roads and bridges, but was also responsible for promoting and developing its tourism programs. Tourism provided much needed revenue from the state's gasoline tax and also injected money into local economies. From 1934 to 1941, department Plans Engineer Bob Fletcher had the job of developing those programs — a task for which he was particularly well suited. It was under his direction that the highway department distributed free road maps, published promotional brochures, provided picnic areas next to highways, installed roadside historical markers, and built museums across the state to make the tourists' experiences in Montana unforgettable. In 1936, Fletcher initiated an aggressive program to greet tourists at the state's borders at port of entry stations. For nearly 20 years, most tourists' first experience in Montana was at one of the nine stations where they were greeted by clean-cut college men with a hearty "Howdy everyone. Glad to see you!"

A young attendant greets a visitor to Montana at one of the port of entry stations maintained by the highway department from 1936 to the late 1950s.

The idea of the ports of entry stations was a simple one. Visitors to Montana would be encouraged to stop at one of the stations when they entered the state for their vacation. The attendants would give them a road map, brochures, and a tabloid history of Montana. They would answer whatever questions the motorists had about the state, place a "Montana Guest" sticker on the windshield, and then send them on their way. Fletcher often used his promotional literature to explain his philosophy about his programs. In 1937's *Headin' for the Hills* he wrote,

> Shortly after we entered Montana we saw [a] welcome sign which is painted on solid copper . . . . The sign . . . tells you there is a port of entry station one thousand feet down the road and you are supposed to stop there. When George read that he began moaning about another racket and the humiliation of being treated like undesirable aliens. You know, a lot of states do put out a pretty officious, hard-boiled reception at their borders. George was still grumbling and digging for his credentials when we pulled into the station, but up stepped a young fellow with an engaging smile who sang out, "Howdy Everyone! Glad to see you!" in a tone that that sounded as though he meant it.

The ports of entry stations gave visitors their first taste of Montana and the frontier hospitality for which it was (and still is) famous.

Like nearly all of Montana's tourism programs, the stations were designed to evoke the feeling of the Old West. The simple 12' x 18' cabins were sided in half logs with stone chimneys piercing the gable roofs. The multi-pane windows were also designed to enhance the feeling of a pioneer cabin. The interiors were Spartan, consisting of a foyer and a room where the three attendants lived. Furnishings included a sink, two closets, and bunk beds — nothing more.

Fletcher recruited attendants for the stations from the state's colleges. They had to be young, good-looking, well-mannered, and "alert." Their uniforms consisted of blue jeans, cowboy boots, a western-style shirt, and a bandanna. They had to have a good working knowledge of the state and its history. By the beginning of the 1950s, the number of attendants at each station had been reduced to two people and the uniforms changed to resemble those of service station attendants. The stations opened each year on June 15th and closed down after Labor Day weekend — the schedules coincided with college summer breaks. By the early 1950s, the department also occasionally hired high school students to serve as attendants.

The ports of entry stations were the front line in the Montana Highway Department's efforts to draw visitors to the Treasure State. By all accounts, it was a successful program that required a significant outlay of money, but reaped huge dividends in good PR for Montana. By the late 1950s, the department began phasing out the stations because they did not mesh well with the intent of the Interstate Highways. The department sold the ports of entry stations to local landowners or incorporated them into area maintenance shops. The ports of entry stations were quickly forgotten. MDT, however, plans to incorporate one of the old stations into its new Lima Rest Area when it is constructed after 2011. The station will be marked by an interpretive sign celebrating its important contribution to the beginning of the tourism industry in Montana.

Newsline is a quarterly publication of the Rail, Transit and Planning Division, Montana Department of Transportation.

MDT Wants Your Comments

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit *http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf*, or give us a call at 1-800-714-7296. You can mail your comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to *mdtnewprojects@mt.gov.*

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Helena, MT 59620-1001

Inside This Issue

Contact Information

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only) or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 406-444-7696 or 800-335-7592.

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MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406)444-3423, TTY (800)335-7592, or the Montana Relay at 711.

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MDT's mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality and sensitivity to the environment.

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